



State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509
Country Inn & Suites
5353 North 27th
Lincoln, NE
February 12, 2008
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under “conferences & meetings” at least 5 days prior to each meeting.

Present: *Debra Bauer, Sharon Bloechle, Katie Durfee, Alvin Fox, Sue Gieschen, Gayle Hahn, Jason Kerkman, Les Kimmons, Frank Lloyd, Larry Niemeyer, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, Angela Smith, Pearl Van Zandt, and Terry Wilson.*

Absent: *Mitch Arnold, Linda Douglas*

Minutes by *Cheryle Adams*

Gayle Hahn called the meeting to order.

I Public Comment/Announcements

The council accepted Marc Hultine’s resignation.

The Council will be meeting in the Capital Room at the Country Inn & Suites for the next meeting. Council members will need to come in the side door and take the elevator downstairs.

A bill has been introduced by Diane Schimek that could affect council. It mandates that any government sponsored board/commission/council needs to have at 50-50 male/female membership.

II. Approval of Agenda

No objections to agenda. The agenda was accepted by unanimous consent.

III. Approval of minutes from November 14, 2007

No objections to the November 14, 2007 minutes. The minutes were accepted by unanimous consent.

IV Director’s Report (Frank Lloyd)

1. **Case Reviews for 2007-08.** The Program Directors are conducting case reviews on a sample of consumers who were not successfully employed after services were provided. Four of the fourteen reviews have been completed. The Office Director and an Emerging Leader from each team are assisting with their review. The results of the review are discussed with the team. After all the reviews are completed, statewide

recommendations will be made to help increase our Rehab Rate – the percent of consumers who were successfully employed following the provision of Voc Rehab services.

2. **Customer Satisfaction Survey.** Three of the surveys are in development. (1) The Employment discussion survey is in operation statewide. Staff have been instructed to offer the survey to all consumers who have completed the Employment Discussion and have applied for VR services. (2) The Job Planning Discussion survey is being piloted in one office, but appears to need significant revisions to simplify the survey for consumers. (3) Placement staff in several offices are piloting the Job Search Strategy survey. It is similar to the Employment Discussion survey and is likely to be ready for statewide implementation in a few weeks. More information will be presented at the February 12th SRC meeting
3. **Employment Warrant Monitoring Update.** During the past year a former VR employee has been conducting the Employment Warranty monitoring for several teams. This has been a pilot project to determine the effectiveness of centralizing this statewide process. During this time the monitoring procedure and data collection requirements have been improved. We have decided to contract with Easter Seals to perform the monitoring statewide. A 6-month contract with Easter Seals will give us information on the statewide continuing costs to fully implement this program.
4. **Goal Alignment Process.** VR is developing a goal setting process that will increase staff, SRC, and other stockholder's involvement in our yearly goals. This item will be presented at the upcoming February 12th SRC meeting.
5. **Juvenile Justice Partnerships.** Joni Minor who has been operating the very successful JJS program in Omaha has been promoted to a Program Director position. She will continue to operate out of Omaha but will train her replacement for the JJS program. Joni will be helping VR set up similar JJS partnerships in Lincoln, Sarpy County, and the Columbus area. She and Jack Shepard, Program Director of VR's Transition programs, will also be working with the Grand Island and Kearney offices to set up employment sites for female juveniles who are at the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC) in Geneva. This program will include transition services to the juveniles' as they transition back to their community. Local VR offices will be involved. These JJS programs will help fill a critical gap for students who dropped out of school and have not been successful in their community.
6. **Placement Roundtable.** For the past 3 years VR transition staff have participated in a statewide Transition Roundtable meeting developed by Jack Shepard and the Transition Committee. This has been a very effective way for Transition staff to begin the new school year. New procedures and issues regarding our work with the school are discussed.

We are setting up a similar yearly meeting for placement staff. Jim Coyle and the Placement Committee are coordinating this event during September 2008. The focus will be on increasing employment opportunities for consumers in the growing health care industry. Approximately 35-40 participants will attend this important event.

7. **RSA Monitoring Goal—Employment Outcomes.** This goal requires that VR implement strategies to achieve a “Rehabilitation Rate” of 65% or higher. The National standard is 55.8%. After one quarter of data, VR is operating at a rate of 65.8%. Our achievement for this goal will be measured at the end of the Federal fiscal year—in 3 more quarters.
8. **RSA Performance Indicators Update.** VR met all of the Federal indicators for F2007 and continues to meet them through the first quarter of the Federal 2008 year. Quarterly reports on our progress by team are made available to staff each quarter.
9. **Rule 72 Update.** The public hearing is set for February 15th at 1:30 P.M. in the Department of Education State Board room. We hope the Rule will be finalized by July 1, 2008. The Rule still needs final approval of the State Board and clearance from the Attorney General’s office prior to submitting to the Governor for final approval.
10. **State Rehab Council Annual Report.** The 2007 SRC Annual Report will be available at the 2-14-08 meeting or shortly thereafter. We are still waiting on printing.
11. **Workplace Environment Survey.** The Gallup organization has done extensive work in identifying the factors that most clearly measure a positive workplace environment. We are asking all VR field staff to respond to the 13 questions that Gallup reported in the book, *First Brake All the Rules*, published in 1999. The anonymous survey will be tabulated for the state—not individual teams. The results will provide the basis for Frank and Margy’s team visits in April as well as the foundation of a workplace environment goal for each team. The survey this year will provide a baseline to evaluate the extent to which our workplace environment is determined by staff to be a positive place to work.

V. Old Business

A. Update on client satisfaction surveys— (Frank Lloyd)

There are three surveys being circulated to gain consumer input. They are (1) Employment Discussion, (2) Job Planning and (3) Placement. The intent is to give consumers the opportunity to rate the service they just completed. Once completing the service the consumer has opportunity to go a VR lab computer and complete the survey online.

Vic distributed the results from the Employment Discussion. There were 257 people who have already taken the survey

There was discussion concerning those consumers not wanting to take multiple surveys every time they complete a process. The committee is looking at doing a more random type of survey so the same people aren’t always being surveyed. This will deal with the planning process, the IPE booklet and signing off on the IPE.. For now the planning survey is on hold.

After the Employment Discussion, Assessment, and Career Exploration is the Planning Process. Sometimes that process can be done in a week or much longer, depending on where the individual is at in the process. This can affect the survey depending on the

length of that process. The consumer forgets the various steps, the early steps. The survey is still being developed and revamped.

The Job Search Strategy survey is being piloted right now. Placement staff is having consumers fill out the survey on-line. This is available to all the teams, but not officially offered to all the teams.

B. Senator Lunch 3/25/2008 (Employer Committee)

The lunch will be on Tuesday, March 25, noon, at the State Capitol in the cafeteria. They ask that council members arrive around 11:45. If you would like to have mileage reimbursed, contact Cheryle Adams. Jim has over 30 senators signed up to participate. The lunch is being paid by Grand Island Goodwill. Jim has a list of the senators who will be participating in the luncheon. This is solely a council function. Jim will email the list of senators to council members. Kipp Ransom will do the presentation. Jim will provide a data sheet to the senators concerning the breakdown of VR consumers in each district.

C. Transition Update (Angela Smith)

There are three transition conferences

Omaha Area

Sandy Peterson for ESU #3, working with Assistive Technology Transition Specialist Kathryn Johnson
Conference will be held April 24th at ESU #3

Central Nebraska

Rita Skiles from ESU #11 working Assistive Technology Transition Specialist Angela Smith.
Conference will be held April 1st at Kearney Holiday Inn.

Western Part of the State—Bridgeport NE

Jan Barber from ESU #16 working Assistive Technology Transition Specialist Angela Smith.
Conference will be held April 8th at Nebraska Prairie Winds Community Center.

VI. New Business

A. VR calculator/clock/calendar promotion (Frank Lloyd)

The Placement committee every year comes with a marketing tool to take out to employers promoting VR. Don distributed the electronic combination calculator/calendar/clock to council members. This has a nice display area for a personal picture. Frank likes this as opposed to a printed calendar that typically goes out of date. This will keep running, has our logo "We've Got The Solution". This has been trademarked by VR.

B. Meeting Days (Gayle Hahn)

During the conference call the Executive Committee discussed attendance as an issue. They felt it was prudent to check to see if Tuesdays still worked well with everyone, or should there be a change. Several commented that occasionally they have Tuesday conflicts and Linda Douglas is unable to attend on any Tuesday due to class. It was commented that Mondays and Friday's are not good days.

Discussion ensued and it looks like there are still conflicts with council members on the other days. The meeting dates are known a year in advance so people can note the dates on their calendars. General consensus was to have the SRC meeting continue being the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

C. Propose SRC revision of operational procedures (Don Crouch)

Don mailed out the proposal to the council outlining the recommended change. The change has to do with how a council member may be removed from the council. He is trying to make this a smoother process. The way it is originally written, hasn't worked well. The Executive committee should have power to remove a person if it is in the best interest of the council.

Pearl made a motion to accept the change as presented by Don. Alvin seconded. Motion accepted by unanimous consent.

Don will make changes, but they won't be official till the next meeting.

D. VR goals for 2008 (Frank Lloyd)

There will be a four day Quality Assurance training to be announced later. Fourteen members of our leadership council including Vic will be looking at various issues, setting goals. There is a need to align our goals. We have state goals, state rehab council goals, Department of Education goals, Rehab Services goals, etc. Lots of goal setting, with them getting fragmented over the years. There needs to be one set of goals that everyone will work on together through the years and then celebrate once completing them.

We need to align the goals to have some cohesiveness. All the different entities who want goals, will need to get in line. We are currently working with the Rehabilitation Service Administration to set those goals. They will go through several levels of approval. Goal setting is a two- year process, starting October 1. These will have had a year of development already. Then in October 1st of this year the goals will be published and in the goal document you will see the state's top level goals. You will also see for each VR team their response to some of these goals and what they will do on the local level to achieve or support the goal. Each team will provide a one-sentence summary on what they will do to achieve that particular goal. This will help VR to focus and as a result we will perform better and move together in a direction.

This year we are starting in the middle of the process. Frank has drafted a timeline and has been meeting with the different levels of leadership and staff. One question he has been asking is "what do you think the organization should work toward or work on in the future?" Frank and Margy have been coming up with a few draft goals and will firm them up so they will become part of the state plan.

Tentative goal selection:

1. Production Goal.
2. Federal Standards and Indicators—there are 7-8 of those. Each team will have a goal that they will have to meet the criteria for that portion of the goal.
3. Developing Effective Community Partnerships. Partnerships with other entities to help us effectively help consumers.
4. Increase the Rehab Rate. The Feds wants us to continue to look at this. If the consumer leaves without a job, this affects our rate and effectiveness.
5. Improve Customer Satisfaction and Engagement. If the consumer is satisfied with the service they will stay with us and others will come. Point is how do you keep people engaged all along the process. When people become disengaged, the VR is no longer effective for them. We have to understand where that occurs and want teams looking at that. What causes consumers to become disengaged?
6. Increase staff knowledge in the Rehab Process. Giving staff vital information and creating contacts in the community so they can be effective in their job.
7. Strength and Interpersonal Relationships Within the team. The success of the program and the value of the service to the consumers is when you have staff with diverse strengths working together. If staff don't like each other then there is friction. Helping staff find ways to collaborate and effectively work together for the benefit of the consumer.
8. Need Something Related to Transition. Come up with some broad goal related to transition.

VII. Reports

A. CAP Report (*Vicki Rasmussen*)

Questions were discussed regarding the CAP report. Vicki also shared her ideas with the council regarding CAP outreach specifically focused on transition and rural areas.

B. SILC Report (*Alvin Fox*) None

C. ATP Report (*Angela Smith*)

At last report, ATP's database shows a total cost of projects authorized for VR consumers referred under this process (for the 2006-07 fiscal year) of \$634,238. Of that total, \$473,029 were Title 1 funds and \$161,209 were funds from other resources. This does not include cases that are in process and waiting for evaluation reports, quotes, etc.

The total count for VR consumers assisted by ATP for the 2006-07 year was 514 compared to 206 for the 2005-06 year.

D. Committee Reports

1. Client Service Committee (*Kipp Ransom*)

The committee looked at the Employment Discussion survey in detail. Most of the comments were positive according to the survey results. They found some positive comments concern a particular specialist and is looking at ways to recognize those individuals.

The survey didn't serve the deaf community, unfortunately that was overlooked. They plan on contacting the Commission for the Deaf to rectify this.

The committee then reviewed the draft for the Placement survey. It will be piloted in the Fremont and Grand Island offices. The placement specialist will take the consumer over to the computer to complete the survey after the job search meeting.

It was suggested that they focus on the Job Search survey for three months, then implement the Placement survey for the next three months.

The surveys will help VR find those issues that are important to the consumer and how VR can improve.

The committee asked that the Job Planning survey be added as an agenda item for the April meeting.

2. Employer Services Committee (*Jason Kerkman*)

The Senator luncheon is scheduled for March 25th. Jim has 27 senators who will be attending and 11 no show. Kip and Jim will get together to make an outline for this luncheon. Jim is still trying to contact those senators that he hasn't heard from yet.

Erin Reihle from Cincinnati's Children's Hospital and other area hospital personnel will be asked to present at a statewide training in September for placement and other VR staff. The goal of the training is to help develop better training opportunities with Nebraska hospitals.

They are working on a Placement Training video. It focuses on how to phone an employer, set an appointment and make a cold call.

The committee is working on a disability awareness video to be used when making business presentation. The committee will provide feedback.

They are also working on the scholarship program for transition students with CVS and Walgreens. They want to expand the program this next year. The goal this year was to have 30 transition scholarship companies around the state.

3. Transition Services Committee (*Angela Smith*)

The emphasis will be on production, strength in community partnerships, more parent outreach and strengthening partnerships with parents. There are two surveys one for students to find out what they think about transition services and a survey for the parents.

They are working on developing a youth leadership council. There will be 3-4 regions established across the state, to help students develop leadership skills. Person develop youth leader council. 3-4 regions across state, students develop leadership skills. The leadership council is a funding collaboration between SPED and VR. Want the to develop some prestige and to report to the State Board of Education periodically. They will regularly report to the state rehab and SPED councils. In addition to training the youth training, there will be young people around the state who other students can contact. We want this council to serve as a place where youth will feel comfortable to talk about disability issues. The youth leadership council holds a lot of promise. The Commissioner of Education is very supportive of this.

The transition summit is scheduled April 3rd in Grand Island.

Meeting adjourned.